



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## STINGING FORK FALLS STATE NATURAL AREA HIKE SLATED FOR JULY 12

**Nashville, Tenn.** - The Department of Environment and Conservation's Division of Natural Areas will host a creek outing at Stinging Fork Falls State Natural Area in Rhea County near Spring City on Saturday, July 12. Participants should meet at 11 a.m. at the trailhead parking area.

The day's activities will kick off with a two-mile hike (round trip) into the deep-pocket wilderness to Stinging Fork's waterfall. There, participants can cool off in the creek and eat lunch at the falls. For the nature enthusiast, an additional hike to Piney Falls is planned later in the day. Natural Areas Program Manager Lisa Huff will serve as guide for the day.

"While this is a fairly short hike, part of it is very steep, so we'll take our time to accommodate novice hikers," said Huff. "This will be a leisurely trip and a chance to enjoy the cool water in the heat of the summer. It's truly a beautiful area."

Participants should bring water and a picnic lunch and wear sturdy footwear and comfortable clothes. They also may want to bring walking sticks and lightweight floats for the creek. Reservations are required for the guided hike and can be made by contacting Huff by phone at (865) 594-5601 or by e-mail at [Lisa.Huff@state.tn.us](mailto:Lisa.Huff@state.tn.us) by July 10. In the event of inclement weather, the hike will be cancelled.

Stinging Fork Falls is a 783-acre natural area, named for the 30-foot waterfall located within the Stinging Fork gorge. The creek flows over the fan-shaped falls, then quickly slips through chutes and tumbles over cascades below the falls. The gorge contains a second-growth mixed mesophytic forest, with steep cliffs along the smaller bluffs that descend into the gorge. An oak-pine forest can be found along the gorge bluff. Indian Head Point provides a view of the gorge and creek 160 feet below.

Stinging Fork Falls is located west of Spring City. From State Highway 68 in Spring City, turn on Shut-In Gap Road. Proceed on Shut-In Gap Road, initially driving beside the Big Piney River, then climbing the escarpment of the Plateau. Continue about 5 miles from Spring City to the Stinging Fork Falls parking area on the right.

The hike at Stinging Fork Falls is part of a series of monthly, guided field trips to Tennessee State Natural Areas offered by the department's Division of Natural Areas. Tennessee has 79 designated State Natural Areas throughout the state, covering more than 110,000 acres of ecologically significant lands. More information about Tennessee's natural areas program, including a complete list of all natural areas and scheduled field trips, can be found at <http://tn.gov/environment/na/>.

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